

Pupils' Bullying at School Is Not Related to Child-Parent Relationship: Empirical Evidence from the Philippines

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Received: August 4, 2023. Revised: April 5, 2024. Accepted: February 18, 2025.

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the extent of bullying among sixth grade pupils at a public school in Negros Oriental, Philippines, and analyze whether or not bullying at school among pupils is related to child-parent relationship. **Research design, data, and methodology:** The sample participants of this study consisted of 85 pupils who came from three sections of grade six and 85 parents of these pupils. This study employed a quantitative-descriptive design using self-administered questionnaires to obtain robust data to address the research questions. The questionnaires used were the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) and Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS). **Results:** The results reveal that bullying only happened once or twice a month. Further, the extent when pupils were bullied, and the extent when they were bullies were found to be positively correlated, $r(83) = .548$, $p < .001$. There is also no relationship between the extent of bullying and child-parent relationship. **Conclusion:** Parents positive interaction with their children does not guarantee that their child will not commit bullying and also to the parents that have negative interaction with their children does not mean that their child will be bullies. Thus, child-parent relationship has nothing to do with the bullying that occurs in school.

Keywords : Bullying, Pupils, Parent-Child Relationship, Elementary School, Philippines

JEL Classification Code: E44, F31, F37, G15

1. Introduction

One of the most common types of violence in a school setting is bullying, which is defined as having an aggressive, mean-spirited, deliberate, or persistent attitude (Soares et al., 2022). Bullying has a negative impact on children's mental health, impeding their ability to learn normally, grow emotionally and psychologically, and notably engage in the crucial and positive socialization process at school (Almahasni, 2019). When exposed to violence, children who lack warmth, attention, and attachment as a result of having a bad emotional attitude as a child will not be able to manage it in a healthy way (Erdoğdu, 2016). Additionally, school students with behavioral problems were found to

concurrently adjust poorly to academics and experience a higher frequency of loneliness and social unhappiness.

Since bullied students experience fear and weakness, bullying at school has an impact on students' personality qualities and sense of self-worth (Al-Raqqad et al., 2017). Similarly, students who encounter bullying in their academic institutions may fear going to school and so perceive it as an unsafe or unhappy place (Chowdhury, 2020).

Currently, there are no studies on the connection of bullying at school and child-parent relationship in an elementary school. This research area is worth investigating because victimization through bullying seriously impairs pupils' ability to learn and develop (Huang & Zhao, 2019). With that, it is worthy to study whether or not bullying at

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school among pupils is related to child-parent relationship.

Bullying happens everywhere, whether within your family or among your peers, and it is most common in schools. People that engage in school bullying assume various roles: as bullies (bully others), as victims (have been mistreated), or as bully-victims (bullying others while also being bullied themselves) (Xiao et al., 2022). Students are bullied for a variety of reasons, including differences in color, sexual orientation, religion, abilities and disabilities, weight, height, or anything else that makes one child different from another. In addition to negatively affecting the school environment in general and the student's cognitive, emotional, and social foundation in particular, bullying is seen as an expanded phenomenon and an educational, social, and personal problem that affects the student's right to learn in a safe academic environment (Almahasni, 2019).

Parents must also be able to recognize the warning signs displayed by children who are being bullied and be aware of what to do if bullying occurs (Lukowiak et al., 2017). It is crucial to understand what parents think bullying is since their perceptions of the behavior will affect how they react to it (Ey & Campbell, 2020). In this manner, it's important to pay closer attention to the issue of bullying, particularly its effects (Poláková, 2018). However, there is still research that needs to be done whether or not bullying at school among pupils is related to child-parent relationship.

This study employed a quantitative-descriptive design using self-administered questionnaires and child-parent relationship of Grade 6 pupils from the school aforementioned. The researchers deemed this approach to be appropriate for this kind of study as it intended to measure the extent of bullying, determine the kind of child-parent relationship that exists in the families, and lastly examine the significant relationship between the extent of bullying and the kind of child-parent relationship.

The result of the study intended to provide a guide in mitigating bullying in school. The guide may be a good reference for schools in implementing programs that can address bullying.

This study generally aimed to investigate the extent of bullying among Grade 6 pupils at Santa Catalina Central Elementary School in Negros Oriental, Philippines, and analyze whether or not bullying at school among pupils is related to child-parent relationship. Specifically, this study sought to: (a) measure the extent of bullying at Santa Catalina Central Elementary School as perceived by Grade 6 pupils; (b) determine the kind of child-parent relationship that exists in the families of Grade 6 pupils as perceived by the parents; (c) examine the significant relationship between the extent of bullying and the kind of child-parent relationship; and (d) analyze the significant relationship between the extent of bullying as perceived by those who were bullied and those who were bullies.

2. Literature Review

Bullying is a serious issue in schools all across the world, and it can have serious short- and long-term effects on individuals (Johansson et al., 2022). Students who are bullied at school suffer negative effects such as feelings of loneliness and a loss of school ties (Carney et al., 2020). Bully victims, reactive bullies, or aggressive victims are those who bully others in revenge for being bullied themselves (Shetgiri, 2013). Bullying can take many different forms, including calling people names, hitting or threatening them, and spreading untrue rumors (Jan & Husain, 2015). Small-scale childish teasing incidents can develop into ongoing bullying and rising verbal violence (Akgül, 2020). It was discovered in the current study that pushing and shoving, making fun of someone, and spreading rumors were the most often reported kinds of bullying (Ahmed et al., 2021). With that, parents must also be able to recognize the warning signs displayed by children who are being bullied and be aware of what to do if bullying occurs.

The risk that a kid may experience bullying is due to parenting methods and other factors of family life (De Winter et al., 2005). In contrast, there are also studies that show that parent-child relationships of elementary school pupils with bullying behaviors and behaviors of being bullied have a significantly negative association (Shen & Chao, 2018). No matter what, family ought to give the child the right kind of support for their physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional growth into a contributing member of society; this helps children develop a positive personality, good self-esteem, and self-confidence (Ünal & Boz, 2020). Undeniably, due to feeling forced, under pressure, or extremely free, children who experience authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are more likely to display negative social behaviors such as anxiety, introversion, and violence (Uygun & Kozikoğlu, 2019).

In addition, when exposed to violence, children who have grown up with a negative emotional attitude—one that is defined by a lack of warmth, attention, and attachment—will not be able to handle it in a healthy way. Open communication between parents and instructors and students really acts as a protective factor to lessen or prevent violence; offensive home communication is a risk factor for school violence (Garcés-Prettel et al., 2020). Additionally, experiencing a lot of punishing behavior in the home, violence exposure, stress from parents, and discipline are connected to poor academic achievement during children's early years (Schwartz et al., 2013). To strengthen their children's capacity to defend bullying and victimization, parents of children from impoverished families should provide extra care and support (Huang & Zhao, 2019). The more peer victimization children experienced at school, regardless of the extent of parental attachment at home, the

higher their level of despair and the higher their level of rage (Luanpreda & Verma, 2016). Therefore, a child's personality develops and is formed in large part by the family circle, which serves as the setting for the first few years of life and includes family members who are models in all ways for the child (Yüksel-Şahin, 2015).

In order to reduce and prevent bullying-related behaviors that lead to negative outcomes for kids including not wanting to attend to school, declining academic performance, depression, and suicide, teachers and families are crucial partners in the process (Demirbağ et al., 2017). Training for teachers and other school personnel was important, particularly regarding how to develop a positive school environment and deal effectively with bullying (Panyawong, 2019). With that, students are observed and monitored throughout the school day, staff members step in to stop bullying when it is seen, parents of bullied children are invited to meetings, and focused interventions are created for specific students (Olweus & Limber, 2010). In addition, the study by Donoghue, et al., (2015) revealed the importance of motivating kids to discuss bullying and how they felt about reporting it. School social workers and psychologists can encourage students to share their feelings about bullying in their own words by holding open group talks.

Theoretically, based on the social action theory, a person's environment, although important to one's development, is not the sole determiner of one's action. Individuals have agency separate from their environment, they have the ability to detract and subvert societal expectations (Weber, 1989). A child may have a good relationship with their parents, or even behave appropriately with them present, and even then they still have the innate ability to subvert such expectations of good behavior. The reasons for such behavior vary and are never uniform, which is why the researchers aim to disprove child-parent relationships as a sole or primary determiner of a pupils bullying behavior, as it is merely one of many reasons and not a significant trend.

Given these facts, there are existing studies that focus only on the factors of bullying, integrating school interventions, and parenting styles. However, there is still a lack of study that the researchers need to address. Therefore, the researchers in this present study intend to analyze whether not bullying at school among pupils is related to child-parent relationship to fill the gap of the existing studies.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Design

The study employed quantitative-descriptive design using self-administered questionnaires to obtain robust data to

address the research objectives.

3.1.2 Setting

This study was conducted at Santa Catalina Central Elementary School, a public school in the Municipality of Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental, Philippines. The grade six pupils of this school consisted of seven sections with the total population of 240 and seven grade six advisers. However, the researchers selected only three sections with the total population of 104 pupils as their respondents.

3.1.3 Respondents

The respondents in this study consisted of 85 grade six pupils and 85 parents of these pupils. They were the ones who willingly accepted the invitation to participate in this study and successfully completed the questionnaires. The number of respondents mentioned above indicated the 81.75% retrieval rate out from the 104 pupils from the three sections and 104 parents.

3.1.4 Instruments

The researchers used two questionnaires in this study. The first one was the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ), which is a standardized questionnaire developed by Dan A. Olweus, to measure the extent of bullying as experienced by grade six pupils. This instrument consists of 36 items. The second one is the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS), which is an instrument developed at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education and Human Development that evaluates parents' perceptions of their interactions with their children and was created by Dr. Robert Pianta. This instrument consists of 30 items.

3.1.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Before the data gathering, the researchers coordinated with the Public School District Supervisor (PSDS) in Sta. Catalina District III for the approval to allow them to conduct their study. The data gathering was done in one month; it started on March 22, 2023 and ended on April 22, 2023. In the 3rd week of the month, the researchers distributed the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) to the pupils in the school. The data from the pupils were completed on the 28th day of March. Afterwards, the researchers distributed the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS) to the parents of these pupils to determine the kind of child-parent relationship that exists in their families through house-to-house visitation on the 4th day of April, and it ended on the 22nd day of April. After gathering all the information, the researchers tabulated the gathered data.

3.1.6 Analysis

In analyzing the gathered data, the researchers used the frequency count to determine how frequently each variable occurs, and Pearson Correlation to measure the relation between child-parent relationship and the extent when pupils were bullied and bullies.

3.1.7 Ethical Considerations

The researchers gave informed consent forms to the parents and assent forms to the pupils, ensuring that each carefully read the consent and assent forms to make sure that participants understood the full scope of the study's objectives. Similar to the informed consent and assent form processes, the researchers did not utilize names or any other information that could be used to identify a specific person.

Results revealed that bullying only happened once or twice a month. This section only shows how many times the pupils have been bullied at school in the past couple of months, and it resulted in the fact that most of the respondents were bullied once or twice a month, in general.

Instead, the researchers kept all documents and evidence used in gathering the data confidential. Additionally, they

honored the decision of those who chose not to participate. Similar to the informed consent and assent form processes, the researchers did not utilize names or any other carefully read the consent and assent forms to make sure that parents and assent forms to the pupils, ensuring that each participants understood the full scope of the study's information that could be used to identify a specific person. withdraw from participating in the research in its entirety, particularly while collecting data, even if they had already completed the informed consent form. Lastly, since each response was saved in a secure database, the researchers were the only ones who had access to the data that the respondents provided.

4. Results and Discussion

The tables below contain data from 85 respondents who responded in the extent of bullying as perceived by grade six pupils who were bullied and bullies. The extent of students being bullied at school in the past couple of months that was answered by the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Extent of Bullying at Santa Catalina Central Elementary School as Perceived by Grade 6 Pupils who were Bullied

	I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months (1)	It has only happened once or twice (2)	2 or 3 times A month (3)	About once a week (4)	Several times a week (5)	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months?	29	31	6	9	10	2.29	It has only happened once or twice

Note: n=85 respondents in the study. Range or numerical rating 4.21- 5.00 -several times a week, 3.4 1- 4.20 -about once a week, 2.61- 3.40 -2 or 3 times a month, 1.81-2.60 -it has only happened once or twice, 1.00 - 1.80 -I haven't been bullied at school in the past couple of months.

Bullying can occur in a variety of ways, including by calling individuals names, punching or threatening them, and spreading false information. Data on the types of bullying

those pupils have experienced in the past couple of months is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Extent of Ways how Pupils have been Bullied at Santa Catalina Central Elementary School as Perceived by Grade 6 Pupils

Have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months in one or more of the following ways?	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months (1)	Only once or twice (2)	2 or 3 time a month (3)	About once a week (4)	Several times a week (5)	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
5. Other students told lies or spread false rumors about me and tried to make others dislike me.	28	36	5	4	12	2.25	Only once or twice	1
2. I was called mean names was made fun of or teased in a hurtful way.	30	29	17	2	7	2.14	Only once or twice	2
9a. I was bullied with mean or hurtful messages calls or pictures or in other ways on my mobile phone or over the Internet (computer).	27	40	5	9	4	2.09	Only once or twice	3
10. I was bullied in another way.	25	43	9	6	2	2.02	Only once or twice	4

Have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months in one or more of the following ways?	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months (1)	Only once or twice (2)	2 or 3 time a month (3)	About once a week (4)	Several times a week (5)	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
9. I was bullied with mean names comments or gestures with a sexual meaning.	39	33	2	5	6	1.89	Only once or twice It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	5
6. I had money or other things taken away from me or damaged.	41	29	10	2	3	1.79	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	6
8. I was bullied with mean names or comments about my race or color.	47	26	5	3	4	1.72	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	7
3. Other students left me out of things on purpose excluded me from their group of friends or completely ignored me.	43	35	3	1	3	1.66	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	8
7. I was threatened or forced to do things I didn't want to do.	58	21	2	4	0	1.44	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	9
4. I was hit kicked pushed shoved around or locked indoors.	67	11	3	4	0	1.34	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	10

Note: n=85 respondents in the study. Range or numerical rating 4.21 - 5.00 - several times a week 3.41 - 4.20 - about once a week 2.61 - 3.40 - 2 or 3 times a month 1.81 -2.60 - only once or twice 1.00-1.80- it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months.

It reveals that the highest weighted mean is item 5 and the lowest weighted mean is item 4. The type of bullying that has the highest count is only once or twice a month, while it has not happened to me in the past couple of months has the lowest count. This pattern of results is consistent with the previous literature (Ahmed et al., 2021) wherein it was discovered in the current study that pushing and shoving, making fun of someone, and spreading rumors were the most

often reported kinds of bullying.

Bullies engage in bullying acts in front of their peers and are proud of them, which is evidence that they do so in an effort to compensate for these feelings and gain attention. Data showing that pupils have taken part in bullying another pupil at school in the past couple of months is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Extent of Bullying at Santa Catalina Central Elementary School as Perceived by Grade 6 Pupils who were Bullies

How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in past couple of months?	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months (1)	Only once or twice (2)	2 or 3 time a month (3)	About once a week (4)	Several times a week (5)	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
12. Kept him or her out of things on purpose excluded him or her from my group of friends or completely ignored him or her	39	31	8	3	4	1.85	Only once or twice	1

How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in past couple of months?	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months (1)	Only once or twice (2)	2 or 3 times a month (3)	About once a week (4)	Several times a week (5)	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
11. I called another student(s) mean names, made fun of or teased him or her in a hurtful way.	37	36	9	2	1	1.75	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	2
14. I spread false rumors about him or her and tried to make others dislike him or her.	60	22	0	3	0	1.36	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	3
13. I hit, kicked, pushed and shove him or her around or locked him or her indoors	65	15	3	0	2	1.34	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	4
16. I threatened or forced him or her to do things he or she didn't want to do.	73	11	0	1	0	1.16	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	5
15. I took money or other things from him or her or damaged him or her belongings.	82	3	0	0	0	1.04	It hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months	6

Note: n=85 respondents in the study Range or numerical rating 4.21 –5.00—several times a week 3.41 –4.20—about once a week 2.61 –3.40 –2 or 3 times a month 1.81 –2.60 –only once or twice 1.00 –1.80 –it hasn't happen to me in the past

It reveals that the highest weighted mean is item number 12 “Kept him or her out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends or completely ignored him or her” with only once or twice a month verbal description, while item number 15 “I took money or other things from him or her or damaged him or her belongings” had the lowest weighted mean with the verbal description of it hasn't happened to me in the past couple of months. This means that the extent to which the respondents have taken part in bullying other pupils is not that high.

The table below indicates the kind of child-parent relationship that exists in the families of grade six pupils as perceived by the parents. Table 4 presents the child-parent relationship in which item number 30 got the highest weighted mean of 4.91 that response to “My interactions with my child make me feel effective and confident as a parent” while, the lowest weighted mean is 2.88 that responses to item number 10 “My child spontaneously shares information about himself/herself”.

Table 4: The Kind of Child-Parent Relationship that Exists in the Families of Grade 6 Pupils as Perceived by the Parents

Child-Parent Relationship	Definitely does not apply (1)	Not really (2)	Neutral not sure (3)	Applies somewhat (4)	Definitely applies (5)	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
30. My interactions with my child make me feel effective and confident as a parent.	0	0	1	6	78	4.91	Definitely applies	1
1. I share an affectionate warm relationship with my child.	0	0	1	8	76	4.88	Definitely applies	2
5. My child values his/her relationship with me.	0	0	1	13	71	4.82	Definitely applies	3
26. I often think about my child when at work.	3	1	1	1	79	4.79	Definitely applies	4
20. When my child is misbehaving he/she responds to my look or tone of voice	2	0	2	12	69	4.72	Definitely applies	5
16. It is easy to be in tune with what my child is feeling.	0	3	1	15	66	4.69	Definitely applies	6

Child-Parent Relationship	Definitely does not apply (1)	Not really (2)	Neutral not sure (3)	Applies somewhat (4)	Definitely applies (5)	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Rank
23. When my child is in a bad mood I know we're in for a long and difficult day.	3	5	3	11	63	4.48	Definitely applies	7
13. My child tries to please me.	3	1	3	24	54	4.47	Definitely applies	8

On the other hand, the negative interaction of child-parent relationship in which item number 11 got the highest weighted mean of 4.53 that responses to “My child is overly dependent on me” which means “definitely applies” while the lowest weighted mean of 1.22 that responses to item number 2 “My child and I always seem to be struggling with each other” with the verbal description of “definitely does not apply. It means that there is a positive interaction between the child and their parents and that there is no connection between the child-parent relationship and bullying at school.

Table 5: Pearson r Correlation Result Between the Child-Parent Relationship and the Extent when Pupils were Bullied.

Dependent Variables		Child-Parent Relationship	Extent when pupils were bullied
Child-Parent Relationship	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
Extent when pupils were bullied	Pearson's r	-0.014	—
	p-value	0.899	—

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 6: Pearson r Correlation Result Between the Child-Parent Relationship and the Extent when Pupils were Bullies.

Dependent Variables		Extent when pupils were bullies	Child-Parent Relationship
Extent when pupils were bullies	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
Child-Parent Relationship	Pearson's r	0.081	
	p-value	0.463	

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 7 shows that the extent when pupils were bullied, and the extent when they were bullies were found to be positively correlated, $r(83) = .548, p < .001$. This means that as the extent increases when they are bullied, the extent increases when they are bullies. There is no relationship between the extent of bullying and child-parent relationship, this means that though the parent has positive interaction to his/her child does not guarantee that their child will not commit bullying and also to the parents that has negative interaction with their child doesn't mean that their child will be bullies or vice versa. These results are consistent with the claim that bully victims, reactive bullies, or aggressive victims are those who bully others in revenge for being

bullied themselves (Shetgiri, 2013).

Table 7: Pearson r Correlation Result Between the Extent when Pupils were Bullied and the Extent when Pupils were Bullies

Dependent Variables		Extent when pupils were bullied	Extent when pupils were bullies
Extent when pupils were bullied	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
Extent when pupils were bullies	Pearson's r	0.548***	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

As seen in the data, there is no correlation between parent-child relations and bullying, which reinforces our assumptions as supported by social action theory wherein individuals primarily choose to act in a certain way for their own inherent reasons, environments as such are only one of the factors and not the sole determiner.

There are at least three potential limitations concerning the results of this study. A first limitation concerns mainly the participation of the grade six pupils of Sta. Catalina Central Elementary School. Specifically, three out of seven sections are included, while some data could be obtained from pupils in other four sections of grade six, respectively. A second potential limitation is that other grade levels such as grades one, two, three, four, and five are not included. The third limitation is that teachers are not part of the study, while the researchers can obtain some data from them about bullying at school.

5. Conclusions

This study generally aimed to investigate the extent of bullying among Grade 6 pupils at Santa Catalina Central Elementary School, and analyze whether or not bullying at school among pupils is related to child-parent relationship. Among the three sections, it was determined that the higher the extent to which pupils were bullied, the higher the extent to which they were also bullies and the data in this study supports this claim that the extent when pupils were bullied, and the extent when they were bullies were found to be positively correlated, $r(83) = .548, p < .001$. However, it was also discovered that there is a positive interaction that exists in the families of these pupils. Despite this fact, this does not mean that their child will not be bullied or bullies, and vice

versa. In this study, it was concluded that the child-parent relationship has nothing to do with the bullying that occurs in school.

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